

**Appropriations Committee
March 2, 2015
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Budget Public Hearing**

Senator Bye, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Raymond Frigon and I work for the State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's Remediation Division. I am testifying today as a proud member of CSEA SEIU Local 2001.

As an employee of the Remediation Division with twenty-five years of service, my general job duty is to manage technically complex, multi-million dollar environmental investigation and cleanup projects that have a significant impact to local and regional areas of the State. I work with a variety of stakeholders including parties responsible for soil and groundwater pollution, residents, property owners and municipalities, to ensure proper and appropriate cleanup measures are designed and implemented. Recently my duties have expanded to include oversight of post-closure care at five closed landfills. These landfill projects require active management of contaminated groundwater and methane gas discharging from the sites in a manner that maintains DEEP's compliance with the environmental laws enforced by multiple divisions within the Department. Chief among all my projects is ensuring our state's population is not exposed to unsafe concentrations of pollution.

The work performed by me and other scientists in my Division is supported by a continually shrinking workforce comprised of very talented and knowledgeable staff from virtually all branches within the DEEP. Over the years I have watched many of my long-time colleagues retire after providing years of dedicated service to the State. Many of the retirees have been highly regarded scientists in their field and are generally considered subject matter experts. As they go out the doors of DEEP, their invaluable knowledge and wisdom is not effectively passed down to remaining staff, since the number of staff remaining steadily declines. The succession planning I've been involved with has essentially consisted of the retiree graciously offering their home phone number to remaining employees with a standing offer of "Call me if you run into trouble".

In these economic times, the mantra across all sectors of government and businesses alike has been "do more with less". Given the economic times we are in, this is only reasonable. The dedicated and talented people of DEEP have demonstrated their commitment to quality public service at a low cost by continually leaning processes to get the job done faster and cheaper. The staff has made DEEP a recognized leader among State agencies in this area.

Despite the efforts to streamline processes, the declining number of DEEP staff is having an impact on the remaining staff and the level of service we provide to the public. The decline in staff numbers has not only added to the work load of the remaining staff, but is jeopardizing

DEEP's own compliance with the statutory requirements it enforces. What it has meant for me is frequently working well beyond my scheduled work hours, with no compensation, to keep projects moving and costs down, and most importantly protecting the public. I'm not here this evening to ask for a pat on the back for a job well done, I'm here to inform the Committee that the critical services provided by the DEEP are in jeopardy due to a constant decline in staff numbers. In my opinion, DEEP is at a critical juncture with respect to maintaining services and performing activities required by state statute.

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard and for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Raymond Frigon
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